



**60 YEARS**



**D-DAY**

**408 "Goose" Squadron  
Association**



**Winter Newsletter 2004**

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I would normally open the Newsletter with a hearty welcome and a wish for happiness and prosperity in the New Year but this time I will not do that and open the newsletter with an excuse. I looked up the word “procrastination” in the dictionary and after reading the definition; I plead “not guilty”, sort of! The fact that you are receiving the newsletter closer to Christmas was due in part to the repatriation of the squadron from its yearlong deployment to Bosnia. All of the personnel who dedicated themselves to restoring and maintaining peace in that far away land were given a much-deserved rest and just recently, the unit has returned to full strength.

The newsletter has been produced for your enjoyment and contains some interesting articles about the past and present. As I had reported to the membership in the Spring, plans are underway to hold a reunion in the Spring of 2006 and more information is available within.

As I opened with an “excuse” I will close with a “wish”. On behalf of the Commanding Officer, officers, men and women of 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron I wish each and every member of the Association good health, prosperity and happiness for the Christmas season and the New Year.

**FOR FREEDOM!**

MWO Rod Fader  
National Chairman

# ***Our First Mission***

By Bruce Wallace

The target was a flying bomb site (V1) at or near L'HEY just over the coast of France. Exactly where doesn't matter to the event. It was our first operation (OP), as a crew, over enemy occupied territory and I guess we were all "on our toes" and somewhat nervous.

We crossed the coast in an easterly direction and north of the target. We turned south at the appropriate point to head directly toward the target. The bomb aimer (Hamish) took over from the navigator when the target came in sight. He then, through his bomb site readings directed me, the pilot, to the bombing site giving me instructions, through his internal microphone, by saying left left or right right depending on his pinpoint to the target. His instruments would tell him exactly when to drop the bombs. At the appropriate time and point, he would command me to open the bomb bays, which I would do by pushing a lever while still giving me instructions as which way to direct the aircraft. It became a finite point, at last. After five minutes of this procedure that his bombsite gave him, the best instant to release the bombs by pushing a button in his hand that gave the electrical impulse to the bomb bay that released the bombs.

The instant the bombs were released from their moorings in the bomb bay, there was a significant lift to the aircraft from losing the weight of the bombs. The procedure then was to fly straight and level with no variation of height until the bombs exploded on the ground, hopefully on the target at which time a picture was taken as your bombs exploded to give evidence back at base, the damage done, the place your bombs exploded relative to the target and that you bombed the target intended.

This procedure was followed for every target day or night.

Once the picture was taken, we were free to go wherever we wanted, probably back to base. The navigator (Vaughan) who was completely involved with this whole procedure and knowing exactly where we were in time, space and on the ground, would give me a compass heading over his intercom as to the direction I should take, or steer the aircraft. The bomb aimer was released from his duties the instant the bombs struck the ground and the picture was taken. The two gunners Howie (tail) and Alvin (midupper) were expectedly scanning everywhere all the time for the enemy fighters to shoot down if they attacked us. As it happened we didn't see one in the whole trip, which, incidentally, only took 3 hrs and 35 minutes from base and back.

At the time the navigator gave me my new compass heading, which would have been to turn right or west back over the North Sea, or English Channel, I for some inexplicable reason – you guess- I turned left which would have taken us inland and deeper into enemy territory. The navigator immediately told me I was going in the wrong direction, left instead of right. I immediately corrected my error in manipulating the aircraft and turned right to the proper and given compass heading

I have often thought of this incident and have come to the conclusion that I should have used the error, on my part, to say to the whole by the way of an excuse, over the intercom. I thought you would like to see the place we would be working over the next few months.



## DAILY OPERATIONS WARTIME 408 SQUADRON

April 4/5, 1943

23 Halifaxes from 405, 408, and 419 Squadrons were joined by 119 Wellingtons from 420, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, and 431 Squadrons on an attack at Kiel. The crews were over the target at between 14,500 and 19,000 feet, releasing 127,000 lbs of high explosives and 328,000 lbs of incendiaries. According to reports, the target was cloud covered and bombing was scattered.

F/Sgt F. Leaver from 408 Squadron returned early as the navigation aids were u/s.

P/O A. Grant and crew flying Halifax II HR-658 coded EQ-V were attacked by an ME-110, there was no claim or damage.

Sgt B. Milligan returned early as the rear turret was u/s.

S/Ldr E. Gilmore RCAF  and crew, flying Halifax II BB-336 coded EQ-O, failed to return from this operation.

Sgt K. Haynes RAF 

F/Lt J. Darroch RAF 

F/Sgt J. Smith RAF 

F/Sgt P. Oyler RAF 

P/O M. Hall RCAF 

Sgt R. Wiggett RCAF-POW

6 crew were killed and one POW after being shot down by flak.

## May 4/5, 1943

32 Halifaxes from 408 and 419 Squadrons were joined by 47 Wellingtons from 426, 428, 429, and 431 Squadrons on an attack at Dortmund. The crews were over the target at between 12,000 and 21,000 feet, releasing 126,000 lbs of high explosives and 183,000 lbs of incendiaries. According to reports, bombing was accurate and severe damage was caused including 2 steel factories and the dock area.

Sgt G. Johnston from 408 Squadron returned early, as the rear turret was jammed.

F/Sgt G. Johannesson RCAF  and crew, flying Halifax II HR-658 coded EQ-V, failed to return from this operation.

Sgt C. Ellard RCAF   
F/O W. Grant RCAF   
F/Sgt M. Metcalfe RCAF   
W/O2 D. Nault RCAF   
W/O2 R. Clitheroe RCAF   
Sgt J. Archer RCAF 

All were lost without a trace.

P/O R. Blackhall RCAF  and crew, flying Halifax II JB-898 coded EQ-Q, failed to return from this operation.

P/O F. Scythes RAF-POW  
Sgt K. Emmons RCAF   
F/Sgt C. Norton RAF-POW  
Sgt G. Semper RAF-POW  
F/Sgt K. Godfrey RAF-POW  
P/O A. Sutton RCAF   
Sgt C. Horn RCAF-POW

3 crew killed and 5 POWs after being shot down by a Night fighter.  
February 19/20, 1944

31 Lancaster from 408 and 426 Squadrons were joined by 98 Halifaxes from 419, 420, 424, 425, 427, 428, 429, 431, 433, and 434 Squadrons on an attack at Leipzig. The crews were over the target at between 19,000 and 25,000 feet, releasing 112,000 lbs of high explosives and 422,000 lbs of incendiaries. According to reports, the target was cloud covered and the attack was scattered. The crews were met by strong winds and fierce fighter attacks. 18 crews, or 128 men failed to return from operations.

F/O J. White from 408 Squadron returned early due to the oxygen system being u/s.

F/Sgt. P. Fillion returned early as the stbd outer was u/s. They landed safely at base on 3 engines.

F/Lt. W. Stewart was hit by flak, the port wing and fuselage was damaged.

F/O J. Frampton, RCAF  and crew, flying Lancaster II DS-788 coded EQ-C, failed to return from this operation.

Sgt. F. Robertson, RAF-Evd

P/O J. Astles, RCAF 

F/O G. Reynolds, RCAF-POW

Sgt. K. Tindall, RAF 

P/O K. Bennett, RCAF 

P/O K. Smith, RCAF 

5 crew were killed, 1 evaded and 1 POW when shot down by a Night-fighter on their first op.

F/Sgt. B. Greip, RCAF-POW and crew, flying Lancaster II LL-632 coded EQ-G, failed to return from this operation.

Sgt. J. Meikle, RAF-POW

F/Sgt. J. James, RCAF-POW

F/O T. Wall, RCAF-POW

Sgt. J. McKinnon, RCAF-POW

P/O W. Plunkett, RCAF 

Sgt. C. Hughes, RAF 

2 crew were killed and 5 POWs when shot down by a Night fighter.

F/Lt. E. Winn RCAF  and crew, flying Lancaster II LL-720 coded EQ-R, failed to return from this operation.

Sgt. E. Bolt, RAF 

F/O J. Leaman, RCAF 

F/O J. Bonneville, RCAF 

P/O R. Wade, RCAF 

T/Sgt. N. Brown, USAAF 

P/O E. Dramnitzki, RCAF 

All were killed.

F/O G. Richter, RCAF  and crew, flying Lancaster II LL-719 coded EQ-V, failed to return from this operation.

P/O C. Roberts, RAF   
F/Sgt. D. Bowden, RCAF   
P/O G. Bennett, RCAF   
P/O S. Roach, RCAF   
P/O R. Kelly, RCAF   
Sgt. F. Skeet, RAF 

All were killed.



**They shall grow not old as we that are left grow  
old;  
Age shall not weary them nor the years  
condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.**

# 408 SQUADRON REMEMBERS D-DAY



At approximately 6 a.m. on June the 6th, 1944, The Royal Canadian Air Forces Lancaster Bombers began bombarding the German defenses at Juno Beach. The Canadian airmen flying these Lancasters were key in instigating the liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany.

As a tribute to Canadian involvement in the June 6th 1944 D-Day Invasion, the Aircraft Structures (ACS) Section led by Sgt Don Marsh was asked to pay tribute to this event and 408's involvement by submitting a commemorative paint scheme for two of their Griffon aircraft. Master Corporal Brown enthusiastically sorted through the squadron's archives for historical information and photographs to put together a design proposal for submission to 1 Wing. He found numerous examples from the squadron archives and chose a design, which incorporated nose art, invasion stripes, and an original roundel.

His design proposal was used as a basis for the approved paint scheme for 1 Wing aircraft, and remained as true as possible to original aircraft markings.

With very little time to complete the project, the entire team pulled together to produce professional and striking results. MCpl Craig Harris created stencils and paint masks from the pictures. With the paint and materials MCpl Dennis Harvey acquired, Cpl Bruce Otto, Cpl Julia Coombs, and Sgt Marsh assisted them with painting the nose art and invasion stripes in four short days.

This section dedicated their weekend to minimize the impact on the squadron's fleet availability. With one look at finished result, it is evident that the ACS Section takes an enormous amount of pride in their work, in 408 Squadron's history, and in being part of the CF.









# HONOURARY COLONEL WEST 60TH BIRTHDAY



## **REUNION 2006**

408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in conjunction with 408 “Goose” Squadron Association will be hosting a reunion to celebrate the unit’s 65th birthday. Dates for this reunion are 8, 9, 10 & 11 Jun 2006 to be held in Edmonton, Alberta. A reunion committee has been formed and all details will be mailed to each member separately. If you have any comments or suggestions please contact us.

National Chairman

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

408 "Goose" Squadron Association is run entirely on the funds generated from membership dues and donations. The administrative costs for office materials and the twice annual printing of the newsletter use a considerable amount of the total yearly membership dues collected. It is very important that all members pay their yearly dues so that we can continue with the important principles of the Association. As Association Chairman it is my responsibility to manage the operating budget on your behalf. Date membership dues paid till can be found on the address label in upper right corner.

When you receive your newsletter please remit your dues quickly. Dues are \$10.00 yearly.

**Please send your dues to: National Chairman  
408 "Goose" Squadron Association  
PO Box 10500 Stn Forces  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4J5**



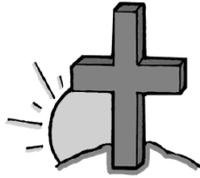
### **408 Squadron Association Website**

Please note the association website address has changed to [www.forfreedom.ca](http://www.forfreedom.ca)



### **MEMBERS WITH E MAIL ADDRESSES**

If you have an Internet address please let us know what it is. If you would prefer having the newsletter sent by electronic means please indicate that as well. All membership lists containing this information is completely secure and access to our membership lists are restricted and protected.



# FINAL FLY PAST

It is with deep regret that the Association wishes to inform its membership of the passing of the following Squadron Association members

Nelson Grant Smith

Frank Bratton

Earle Bowles

# MEMORIES FROM THE PAST









Does Anyone Remember This ?

